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**SHEPTON MALLET
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

(Including details submitted to me by the Sanitary Inspector)



**For the Year Ending
31st December, 1953**

SHEPTON MALLET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH :

T. E. COULSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.E.

SANITARY INSPECTOR :

G. F. HAWKINS, CERT. S.I. JT. BOARD CERT. R.S.I. (MEAT and OTHER FOODS).

(Mr. G. F. HAWKINS also holds the appointment of Surveyor).

CLERK :

A. D. STOCKDALE

TO THE
SHEPTON MALLET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1953.

Area (in acres)	2278
Population (1953)	5272
Number of Inhabited Houses (1951)	1462
Rateable Value, 1st April, 1953	£28,852
Produce of Penny Rate (estimated)	£117
Number of Inhabited Houses is based on the following:—									
Dwelling Houses	1392
Banks and Offices with Living Accommodation	6
Shops, etc., with Living Accommodation	75
Club Premises with Living Accommodation	2
Hotels and other Licensed Premises	22
Public Institutions (Hospitals, etc.)	4
Crown Properties	15
Total ...									1516

In addition to shops, offices, building trades and allied trades, the main sources of employment in the town are cider factories (2), breweries (2), shoe-making, glove factories (2), millers, bacon factory and meat products, railways (2), agricultural engineering, research chemists, general engineering (2) garages and motor engineering, dry-cleaning and dye-works, rope works, motor haulage.

2.—EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

Live Births:—					Males	Females	
Total	31	51	
Legitimate	29	50	
Illegitimate	2	1	Birth Rate:—15.5 per 1,000
Still Births:—					Males	Females	
Total	0	1	
Legitimate	0	1	
Illegitimate	0	0	Birth Rate:—0.35 per 1,000

	Total	Males	Females	
Deaths from all causes ...	82	37	45	Death Rate:—11.4 per 1,000
Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, child-birth:—				
(a) From Sepsis	0
(b) From other causes	0
Deaths of Infants under One Year of age:—				
Legitimate, 1, Illegitimate, 0, Total, 1.				
Deaths of Infants under One Week	1
„ „ „ „ from One to Four Weeks	0
„ „ „ „ from One to Six Months	0
„ „ „ „ from Six to Twelve Months	0
			Total ...	1
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
„ „ Diarrhoea (under two years of age)	0

The total number of deaths occurring in the District was 82 compared with 57 in 1952.

[illegible]

In all "Causes of Death":—

Those dying between the ages of 75 and 80 were	21
" " " " 81 and 85 were	10
" " " " 86 and 90 were	7
Those dying above the age of 90 were	4
A total of 42 or 51.21% of the total Deaths.					

3.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Diseases	Total Cases Notified	Cases Admitted to Isolation Hospital	Total Deaths
Scarlet Fever	3	0	0
Measles	30	0	0
Whooping Cough	8	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorium	1	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0	0
Tuberculosis:—Total	1	0	1
(a) Respiratory	0	0	1
(b) Non-Respiratory	1	0	0

The Notification of Infectious Diseases by Medical Practitioners was satisfactory.

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

One Case Notified. Sight unaffected.

4.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

Measles was very prevalent during the first half of the year. There were no deaths from this disease.

5.—SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE IN THE DISTRICT.

A.—PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

- (1) General: There are two Nurses in the District engaged in general district work, who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association.
- (2) For Infectious Diseases: Infectious diseases were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the District.

B.—MIDWIVES.

There are 2 Certified Midwives practising in the District.

C.—CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

There is one Tuberculosis Dispensary in Charlton Road, provided and staffed by the County Council.

D.—HOSPITALS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

- (1) Tuberculosis: None.
- (2) Fever: None.
- (3) Other: Some unused buildings in the grounds of the former Isolation Hospital have been converted into a Hospital for the aged sick.
The Cubicle block of the former Isolation Hospital has been converted into a maternity Hospital.

There is the District Hospital at Shepton Mallet for the treatment of general medical and surgical cases. There is no Public Assistance Institution, the building having been taken over by the County Council as an Institution for persons suffering from Mental Deficiency.

E.—INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR UNMARRIED MOTHERS AND ILLEGITIMATE INFANTS: None.

HOMELESS CHILDREN: Hillworth House, staffed and equipped by the Somerset County Council.

F.—AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

- (1) For Infectious Cases: None.
- (2) For Non-Infectious Cases and Accidents:—Two Motor Ambulances and one sitting case Car are kept at the Ambulance Depot, Shepton Mallet, and in cases of need, additional ambulances are obtainable through the local branch of the B.R.C.S., and also from Wells and Radstock.

G.—SCABIES:—No cases of Scabies have been reported to me.

6.—LABORATORY WORK.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at The Public Health Laboratory, Taunton; considerable use of this Laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept at Messrs. Boots (Chemists), and Miss Watkins (Chemist) Supplies can be obtained from them by Practitioners on the National Health Service Prescription form.

7.—PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

There is one Sanitary Inspector and Housing and Sanitary Surveyor (a whole-time officer) and myself (a part-time officer). There is one Health Visitor in the District.

8.—WATER SUPPLY.

Practically the whole of the houses in the Urban District have piped water supplies from the mains of the Shepton Mallet Waterworks Company. A Brewery and Bacon Factory supplement the supply from their own wells.

During the year, the supply has been satisfactory both in quantity and quality. There was some minor shortage at Cannards Grave: this trouble has also been experienced in previous years, and is due, I understand, to lack of pressure. Arrangements have been made to overcome this trouble by taking future supplies from the new main to Compton Road.

Satisfactory reports were received from all samples submitted for bacteriological examination.

The Beacon Hill spring supply serves a small number of properties in the northernmost part of the urban district, the remainder of the area being fed by the Winsor Hill springs. The waters are not thought to have any plumbo-solvent action.

A few houses share communal taps, five premises use a private piped supply and six houses rely on well supplies.

The Bacon Factory mentioned above has its own well, but the water is used for washing down and flushing purposes only, the town supply being utilised for all processes in connection with food production.

Water Supplies from Public Mains:—

DIRECT TO THE HOUSES		BY MEANS OF STANDPIPES	
No. of Dwelling Houses	Population	No. of Dwelling Houses	Population
1450	5089	2	7

Extensions of Public Supplies. Extensions of mains have been carried out during the year at Hitchen Lane, Kilver Street and Old Wells Road, the last mentioned by the Shepton Mallet R.D.C. under reciprocal arrangements. In addition, under similar arrangements, a new main is being laid from Cannards Grave to the higher part of Compton Road: this new work is expected to be completed during the early part of 1954. Arrangements are in hand for the construction of a new reservoir at Compton Road and it is hoped to start this work in April, 1954.

Future Proposals. Immediate future proposals comprise the extension of the mains to serve the second part of the Council's housing estate at Ridgeway. A site has also been acquired for the erection of a reservoir at Downside, but this is now being treated as a long-term policy development and priority has been given to the reservoir at Compton Road.

9.—SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The majority of premises in the Urban District are connected to the public sewers. There are however about 70 properties in the outlying areas where main drainage is not available; these properties are located chiefly at Cannards Grave, Fosse Lane and Darshill.

Extension of Sewers. The contract has been placed and the works started for the extension of the sewers to serve the eastern half of the second part of the Councils housing estate at Ridgeway.

Future Proposals. Following the informal inquiry in December 1952 by an Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, draft proposals are being prepared for a modified scheme of improvements and modernisation of the sewage disposal arrangements, and it is hoped that the details thereof will be submitted to the Ministry early in 1954.

The approximate cost would be about £83,000.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Total number in district on 31st December 1953:—

(1) Pail closets 30 (estimated) (2) W.C.'s 1479 (estimated) (3) Other, None.

10.—HOUSING.

DETAILS OF HOUSES ERECTED AND IN COURSE OF ERECTION.

			Houses erected during year		Houses in course of erection at 31/12/53		Conversion to flats or dwellings		Temporary such as Army Huts, etc.
			Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	
Local Authority	...		8	—	16	—	—	—	—
Private Enterprise	...		11	—	6	—	—	—	—
Totals	19	—	22	—	—	—	—

Inclusive of those above built during the year:—

Total number of houses in District	1515
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"	"	"	owned by Local Authority	300
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No. of Post-War Houses erected to 31st December, 1953		Programme for 1954	
By Local Authority	By Private Enterprise	By Local Authority	By Private Enterprise
174	37	45	Not Known

Total number of applicants for Council Houses at end of year :— 187

The applications for Council houses fall into the following groups, in the following order :

(1) Living in shared accommodation	63
(2) Applicants living outside the Urban District and desirous of obtaining accommodation because of local employment or other reasons	48
(3) Insanitary and unfit housing conditions	55
(4) Other reasons	21
	187

The above applications do not take into account the 24 families at present living in requisitioned premises and whom the Ministry of Housing and Local Government are pressing the Council to re-house by the end of 1955.

Three Problems, as regards Housing will confront the Council in the near future, viz :—

SLUM CLEARANCE.

It is hoped that this will be commenced in 1954. The difficulty here will be to find accommodation for families whose slum houses are demolished and who have been paying rent at the rate of 4/- to 6/- per week and who cannot pay very much more. The National Assistance Board will undoubtedly be called upon to help in some of these cases.

THE OLD AND INFIRM.

The problem of these increasingly numerous persons which include Widows, elderly Spinsters and Widowers living alone, is one of considerable difficulty. Some Local Authorities, notably in Dorset, have to some extent solved the problem by the provision of "Eventide Homes." The Somerset County Council have, in a recent Circular, offered financial assistance to Local Authorities contemplating steps in this direction.

PROBLEM FAMILIES.

Some of these families are at present accommodated in requisitioned properties. These properties are due to be de-requisitioned by the end of 1955 and I anticipate that the Council will have considerable difficulty in finding accommodation suitable for these families. Possibly some houses, which would, in the ordinary course of events, be condemned and demolished under Slum Clearance, might be, at least temporarily, adapted to accommodate these persons.

Grants made under the Housing Act, 1949.

No. of applications and houses dealt with by Local Authority and Ministry :—

LOCAL AUTHORITY.

	Received		Approved		Rejected		Under Consideration	
	Applica-tions	No. of Houses	Applica-tions	No. of Houses	Applica-tions	No. of Houses	Applica-tions	No. of Houses
(a) To 31/12/52	1	1	—	—	1	1	—	—
(b) During year	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

MINISTRY.

	No. Sent		Approved		Rejected		Under Consideration	
	Applica-tions	No. of Houses	Applica-tions	No. of Houses	Applica-tions	No. of Houses	Applica-tions	No. of Houses
(a) To 31/12/52	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(b) During year	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

11.—MINISTRY INQUIRIES.

None.

12.—MILK AND DAIRIES.

No. of registered dairy premises	5
No. of Registered Distributors	5

No supplementary licences have been issued to distributors whose dairy is outside the District.

13.—ICE CREAM.

NO. OF PREMISES REGISTERED FOR:—

(a) Manufacture only	Nil
(b) Manufacture and Sale	1
(c) Sale only	11

14.—SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Number of slaughterhouses in use under Ministry of Food	1
Number of registered slaughterhouses	Nil
Number of slaughterhouses in use where horses are slaughtered for human consumption	Nil
Names of any slaughterhouses in use under Ministry of Food. C.W.S. Bacon Factory, Charlton Road, Shepton Mallet.									

Total number of animals slaughtered during the year at the slaughterhouses in use under the Ministry of Food:—56,969.

Approximate weight of meat condemned:—134,177½ lbs.

15.—FOOD PREMISES.

Number of premises registered under Sec. 14, Food and Drugs Act, 1938 ... 9

16.—BYELAWS UNDER SECTION 15 OF THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938.

Date Byelaws came into operation—11th December, 1950. No special action taken other than routine inspection of food premises.

17.—PUBLIC CLEANSING.

The existing arrangements for the collection and disposal of household and trade refuse have been continued. A weekly collection is made of all premises in the District, this work is carried out by contract, a Karrier C.K.3 model 10 cubic yard covered refuse collection vehicle with hydraulic tipping being used.

As regards trade refuse, the Council make a charge, in normal cases, on the basis of 5% of the rateable value of the trade premises and for this payment collect trade refuse on two additional days per week. In the case of a large factory, special arrangements have been made for the removal and disposal of their trade refuse, the actual cost being recovered from the occupiers of the premises.

The whole of the refuse is disposed of by tipping on the controlled system, at a disused quarry at Winsor Hill, Downside, Shepton Mallet; except that some trade refuse and waste paper are incinerated. The collection of waste paper continued throughout the year.

18(a).—PUBLIC SWIMMING BATHS AND POOL.

There is one Swimming Pool in the Urban District owned by the Council. The water is continually circulated, filtered and chlorinated. The temperature of the water is maintained at about 70 deg. F. (minimum).

The type of purification plant is the Horseley Piggott with a Wallace & Tiernan Automatic Chlorinator.

The water was regularly tested, at both inlet and outlet for residual chlorine and pH value. The turnover period is estimated to be approximately 12 hours. The pool is filled from the mains of the Shepton Mallet Waterworks Company.

The daily number of bathers fluctuates considerably, mainly on account of climatic conditions; the estimated maximum daily load is 400 persons, including a large proportion of children.

18(b).—FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR 1953.

PART I. OF THE ACT.

1.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors.

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of		
			Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupiers prosecuted (6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities*	1	23	2		
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	2	44	27	9	
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority * (excluding out-workers' premises)	3	3			
Total		70	29	9	

NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND.

Particulars	M/c Line No.	Found	Remedied	Referred		Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
				To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7.)						
(a) Insufficient	9	2	1		1	
Total		2	1		1	

PART VIII. OF THE ACT.

OUTWORK.

Nature of Work	No. of Out-Workers	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of Prosecutions for failure to supply lists
Wearing Apparel, Making	44	5	Nil

19.—KNACKERS YARDS.

Number registered in district Nil

20.—FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS.

None

21.—CAMPING SITES.

No licenses have been issued in respect of camping sites.

I have the honour to be, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.